



Frequently Asked Questions About the Cleanup Phase

South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination Site
Minneapolis, Minnesota

June 2010

Contact information

For more information, comments or questions about the South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination site, contact:

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You can see official site documents at these locations in Minneapolis:

Green Institute
2801 21st Ave. S., Suite 100

Minneapolis Police Department
Attn: Carla Nielson
1201-B E. Franklin Ave.

Minneapolis Central Library
300 Nicollet Mall, 2nd Floor

Minneapolis Public Library
East Lake Branch
2727 E. Lake St.

Visit EPA's website:
www.epa.gov/region5/sites/cmcheartland

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and its contractors are currently cleaning up properties in the South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination Site area. Last month, EPA permanently located project manager Leah Evison at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency office in St. Paul to manage the South Minneapolis cleanup and other Minnesota sites.

Many South Minneapolis residents have questions about the cleanup. Here are EPA's answers to the most common inquiries:

1. How far along is the South Minneapolis arsenic cleanup?

From 2004 to 2008, EPA cleaned up almost 200 properties with arsenic levels that posed an immediate threat to children. In September 2009, work began on cleaning up 485 additional properties with lower levels of arsenic in the soil. As of mid-June, soil has been removed from about 130 of the 485 properties.

2. Does EPA have enough funding to complete the work?

In 2009, EPA received up to \$25 million in Recovery Act funds to complete the cleanup of this site. That funding will help EPA finish the cleanup at least two years ahead of what was originally expected.

3. When will the work be done?

Our goal for this year is to clean up as many of the 485 properties as we can. The rest will be done in 2011. To complete the work, we need the cooperation of property owners. Most are cooperating with the soil cleanup, but if a property owner is not willing to allow EPA to do the cleanup, it may be necessary to have a notice placed on the property records so that potential future owners and residents are warned of the presence of contamination.

4. Where does the contaminated soil go?

The Veolia Rolling Hills Landfill near Buffalo.

5. How can I get the sampling results for my property?

Contact Leah Evison by e-mail or phone (see box, left).

6. When is my property scheduled for cleanup?

We are working our way block-to-block through the site addressing properties with signed access agreements. You can follow the progress of our cleanup from the map which is updated weekly on EPA's website (see box, left), or call EPA's field office for an update at 612-721-8499. Please be patient; we are working as fast as we can.

7. *If the contamination was wind-deposited, why is it so spotty throughout the neighborhood?*

Some of the contamination is due to wind-blown arsenic from the former CMC Heartland Lite Yard pesticide plant at 28th Street East and Hiawatha Avenue. But there are differences among properties that indicate some contamination is more likely due to pesticide use or soil brought into yards during construction or landscaping. We are cleaning up any yards within the site boundary that have arsenic in soil above our cleanup level, regardless of its source.

8. *How was the sampling boundary selected?*

EPA ran a conservative computer model of how far wind could have carried arsenic from the former CMC Heartland Lite Yard pesticide plant. This resulted in a roughly circular area with a radius of about ¾-mile. The boundary was then updated to include entire blocks in our sampling program.

9. *If my property was sampled and does not need cleanup, is the soil safe? –or–*

If my property is outside the site boundary, is the soil safe?

Inside the site boundary, EPA only sampled properties for arsenic, the contaminant that came from the CMC Heartland Lite Yard. We did not sample properties outside the site boundary. In urban areas there may be other possible sources of contamination such as lead from lead-based paint. The University of Minnesota Extension and Hennepin County have issued a fact sheet called “Urban Gardens and Soil Contaminants,” which is available on EPA’s website (see box, Page 1).

10. *My property is next door to one where a cleanup is being performed. Will this contaminate my property? Is it safe for me to be there during the work?*

There is no threat of contamination spreading from your neighbor’s property to yours during the cleanup process. We will be monitoring dust levels and will take the necessary steps to keep dust at safe levels.

11. *Can EPA do a cleanup if the results for my property are close to, but not over, the cleanup level?*

EPA can only clean up properties that are above the cleanup level. This level was selected after completing a conservative risk assessment that considered how much soil a resident would be exposed to in a year and how many years they might

live at the property. If you still have concerns, there are additional steps you can take at your property to minimize contact with soil. Some of these options are listed in the Minnesota Department of Health’s fact sheet on “How to Reduce Accidental Intake of Contaminated Soils” available on EPA’s website (see box, Page 1).

12. *If I have a problem with the cleanup, who should I contact?*

Contact Leah Evison or Cheryl Allen by phone or email (see box, Page 1). You may also contact EPA’s field office at 612-721-8499. Issues arise in any large construction project. We work hard to address problems and arrange for needed repairs quickly.

13. *What if I am a renter or landlord?*

The Minneapolis Code of Ordinance (Title 12, Chapter 244, Article IV, 244.275) requires landlords to notify renters of sampling results and to permit EPA to perform cleanup at rental properties. Most landlords are cooperating with the cleanup, but others should be aware that violating this section of the ordinance could be a cause for adverse license action.

14. *What if a neighbor needs information in Spanish/Somali/Hmong or another language?*

Please contact Cheryl Allen (see box, Page 1) and EPA will arrange for translation services.

15. *How does the coordination with property owners work?*

Here’s a general outline of the steps we follow during the course of work at a property:

- Get a signed access agreement from the property owner.
- Have an initial preconstruction meeting with the property owner a couple of months (if time allows) before work is expected to begin. In this meeting, EPA gathers information and develops the plan for that property. A landscape inventory and preconstruction topographic survey are performed to get information on the existing property conditions.
- Have a second preconstruction meeting with the property owner a couple of weeks (if time allows) before work starts to get the owner’s approval on the detailed plan.
- Prepare the property for work. This includes locating utilities, removing and storing personal property from the work area, removing vegetation

and installing control measures around the property like orange construction fencing.

- Dig up and remove soil with arsenic levels higher than 25 milligrams arsenic per kilogram of soil. Digging is done 1 foot from buildings, sidewalks, fences and other permanent structures to prevent damage. The soil is excavated to 6 inches under the dripline of trees, 1 foot in open grassed areas and 18 inches in gardens.
- Take a sample (composite from five locations) to see if the remaining soil is below the cleanup criteria (95 mg/kg for subsurface soil). Excavate additional soil if necessary.
- Perform a topographic survey to document the excavation area and depth.
- Place clean soil within the excavation area and compact it to prevent settling, but still allowing water to infiltrate.
- Place clean topsoil for the top 6 inches of the yard (18 inches in gardens).
- Perform a topographic survey for the restored elevations within the excavation area.
- Replace personal property removed from the work area and remove control measures like orange construction fencing. If necessary, repair any items that were damaged.
- Re-landscape the property to return it to the original conditions as discussed with the property owner. The landscaper will water for six weeks to help establish grass and plants.
- Have a follow-up meeting with the property owner to make sure any outstanding issues have been resolved and to sign off that the work has been completed.

16. What happens after the cleanup?

After a cleanup is completed, grass seed is spread on yards and covered with either hydromulch (blue-

green material) or erosion control blanket (straw mat). Both break down naturally and do not need to be removed. After grass is 2 ½ to 3 inches tall, the property owner should begin regular mowing. EPA's contractors will water for six weeks to help grass and plantings get established, and will re-seed any bare spots as necessary. There is a one-year warranty on plants installed. Additional information is available in a fact sheet called "Landscaping Questions and Care," available on EPA's website (see box, Page 1).

17. Are the contractors hired locally?

CH2M HILL is the engineering firm coordinating and managing the work as the EPA contractor. CH2M HILL hired the following subcontractors through a competitive bidding process:

- Arborist – Rainbow Tree Care of Minnetonka.
- Earthwork – Arrowhead Contracting Inc. of Lenexa, Kan. They have established a local project office with local hires and staff from other offices, including laborers and drivers.
- Geotechnical testing services – American Engineering Testing of St. Paul.
- Laboratory services – PACE Analytical of Minneapolis.
- Land surveying – MFRA of Plymouth.
- Landscaping – Margolis Company of Roseville.

18. How many personnel are employed this month?

About 85 people are working on the site daily, including CH2M HILL staff and subcontractors.

Access agreements

EPA has sent letters and access agreement forms to property owners where a cleanup is needed. If you received this letter and have not returned the signed agreement, EPA asks you to send it as soon as possible.

La Hoja de Información está disponible en español en la página de Internet de
EPA: www.epa.gov/region5/sites/cmcheartland.

Si desea que se le envíe una copia, por favor comuníquese con Cheryl Allen al
312-353-6196 o allen.cheryl@epa.gov.

